

§ 3550.153

payments will be assessed a fee to cover the cost of conversion to a money order.

(b) *Application of payments.* If a borrower makes less than the scheduled payment, the payment is held in suspense and is not applied to the borrower's account. When subsequent payments are received in an amount sufficient to equal a scheduled payment, the amount will be applied in the following order:

(1) Protective advances charged to the account.

(2) Accrued interest due.

(3) Principal due.

(4) Escrow for taxes and insurance.

(c) *Multiple loans.* When a borrower with multiple loans for the same property makes less than the scheduled payment on all loans, the payment will be applied to the oldest loan and then in declining order of age. Future remittances will be applied beginning with the oldest unpaid installment.

(d) *Application of excess payments.* Borrowers can elect to make payments in excess of the scheduled amount to be applied to principal, provided there are no outstanding fees.

§ 3550.153 Fees.

RHS may assess reasonable fees including a tax service fee, fees for late payments, and fees for checks returned for insufficient funds.

§ 3550.154 Inspections.

RHS or its agent may make reasonable entries upon and inspections of any property used as security for an RHS loan as necessary to protect the interest of the Government. RHS will give the borrower notice at the time of or prior to an inspection.

§ 3550.155 Escrow account.

Escrow accounts will be administered in accordance with RESPA and section 501(e) of the Housing Act of 1949, as amended.

(a) Upon creation of the escrow account, RHS may require borrowers to deposit funds sufficient to pay taxes and insurance premiums applicable to the mortgage for the period since the last payments were made and to fund a cushion as permitted by RESPA.

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(b) Borrowers may elect to escrow at any time during the terms of the loan if the outstanding RHS loan balance is over \$2,500.

(c) RHS may require borrowers to escrow in conjunction with any special servicing action.

§ 3550.156 Borrower obligations.

(a) After receiving a loan from RHS, borrowers are expected to meet a variety of obligations outlined in the loan documents. In addition to making timely payments, these obligations include:

(1) Maintaining the security property; and

(2) Maintaining an adequately funded escrow account, or paying real estate taxes, hazard and flood insurance, and other related costs when due.

(b) If a borrower fails to fulfill these obligations, RHS may obtain the needed service and charge the cost to the borrowers account.

§ 3550.157 Payment subsidy.

(a) *Borrowers currently receiving payment subsidy.* (1) RHS will review annually each borrower's eligibility for continued payment subsidy and determine the appropriate level of assistance. To be eligible for payment subsidy renewal, the borrower must also occupy the property.

(2) If the renewal is not completed before the expiration date of the existing agreement, the effective date of the renewal will be either the expiration date of the previous agreement if RHS error caused the delay, or the next due date after the renewal is approved in all other cases.

(3) The borrower must notify RHS whenever an adult member of the household becomes employed or changes employment, there is a change in household composition, or if income increases by at least 10 percent. The household may also report decreases in income. If the change in the household's income will cause the payment for principal and interest to change by at least 10 percent, the household's payment subsidy may be adjusted for a new 12-month period. The new agreement will be effective the due date following the date the borrower's information is verified by RHS.